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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/625,657	07/24/2003	Saburou Wakita	240732US3X	8903
22850	7590	05/08/2006	EXAMINER	
OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C. 1940 DUKE STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			TRAN, LEN	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER

1725

DATE MAILED: 05/08/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/625,657

Applicant(s)

WAKITA ET AL.

Examiner

Len Tran

Art Unit

1725

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 2/28/06.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

3. Claims 1-3 and 6-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wakita et al (US '6,299,682), and further in view of Gross et al (US 6,547,849).

Wakita et al disclose a casting apparatus comprising a die, a plate shape heater disposed horizontally, a gas supplying section, and an additional heater located in the bottom (figures).

Wakita et al fail to teach a lid with lid moving means to control an opening amount.

Art Unit: 1725

However, Gross et al disclose a lid (32) disposed between the heater and the molten metal. The lid also comprise a lid opening means and capable of controlling the level of flow of inert gas. Gross et al disclose a lid for the purpose of sealing the molten metal.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time applicant's invention was made to provide a lid in the die of Wakita et al, in order to seal the molten metal.

4. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wakita et al (US '682) in view of Gross et al (US '849) as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Baum (US 4,140,170).

Gross et al disclose the claimed invention above and wherein in molten metal is silicon (abstract), but fail to teach the bottom surface of the lid is coated with silicide.

However, Baum discloses a mold coated with silicide (col. 9, lines 11-12) for oxidation resistance.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time applicant's invention was made to provide a coating of silicide as taught by Baum, on Gross et al's lid in order to prevent oxidation.

Allowable Subject Matter

4. Claims 19-20 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments filed 2/28/06 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to applicant's argument that Gross et al is nonanalogous art, it has been held that a prior art reference must either be in the field of applicant's endeavor or, if not, then be reasonably pertinent to the particular problem with which the applicant was concerned, in order to be relied upon as a basis for rejection of the claimed invention. See *In re Oetiker*, 977 F.2d 1443, 24 USPQ2d 1443 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, Wakita et al fail to teach a lid with lid moving means to control an opening amount. However, Gross et al disclose a lid (32) disposed between the heater and the molten metal. The lid also comprise a lid opening means and capable of controlling the level of flow of inert gas. Gross et al disclose a lid for the purpose of sealing the molten metal. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the

Art Unit: 1725

art at the time applicant's invention was made to provide a lid in the die of Wakita et al, in order to seal the molten metal.

Inquiry

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Len Tran whose telephone number is (571) 272-1184. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 8:30 - 5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick Ryan can be reached on 571-272-1292. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Len Tran
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1725



May 2, 2006